

Sinful Judgment

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1. Discovering and Knowing Ourselves

Before we even start thinking about judging others, we must discover and know ourselves. To get started, imagine now two people who are completely opposite to one another, e.g., Simon the Pharisee and the sinful woman described in **Luke 7:36-50**. Their story teaches us **many lessons** that will help us to discover ourselves and get to know ourselves better.

First Lesson: Avoid those who have the false form of godliness

Simon showed much outward respect for the Lord Jesus and His disciples. What could be more respectful? He had a large, extravagant dinner party in honor of our Savior. Yet, he was utterly ignorant of the Lord Christ, His gospel, and the grace of God.

He had a false form of godliness, but knew nothing of God's saving power and grace. His proud heart was repulsed by the sight of this unnamed woman, who was a sinner, entering his house and being so readily and openly received by the Son of God. About such people, St. Paul said:

- ✠ “But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!” (2 Timothy 3: 1-5)

So, Simon like most religious people, talked about grace and forgiveness, but never experienced it. This proud Pharisee could not digest the idea that he must enter into the kingdom of heaven upon the same ground and side by side with this wretched sinner. He was religious, but lost. He knew his doctrine, but not God. He was respectable, but not gracious. He didn't know the difference between serving the “House of the Lord” and serving “The Lord of the House”.

Second Lesson: Understand that sin has made us all debtors, owing a debt we can never pay

By reason of our sin, we are all head over heels in debt to the law and justice of God. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our great Savior stepped in, paid our debt; and freely granted us the forgiveness of our sins!

- ✠ “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8)

Third Lesson: Show appreciation and gratitude to God who is willing to forgive you at all times

The motive and inspiration for all devotion and service to the Lord Christ, that which compels and constrains believers to live in this world for the glory of God, is forgiveness known and felt in the very soul of a man, and the deep gratitude to, and love for, the Lord Jesus Christ which arises from the experience of God's free, sovereign, saving grace.

- † “For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again” (2 Corinthians 5:14-15)
- † “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9)

How and when did we become rich? When He took flesh and became man and bondservant:

- † “But made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:7)

And through His death on the Cross, we returned back to paradise and became heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven; as the Lord said:

- † “Then the King will say to those on His right hand: Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34)

Now, learning these three lessons would lead us closer to discovering ourselves by answering the question of which one are you: Simon the Pharisee or the sinful woman? To help you a little more, and since we have some knowledge of Simon, let me ask you the following four questions about the sinful woman:

I. Who was this woman?

Wisely and graciously, the Holy Spirit tells us absolutely nothing about this woman except these things.

1. She was a sinner. -- “*Behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner*” (Luke 7:37).
2. She was a believing sinner.
3. She was a forgiven sinner.
4. She was a grateful sinner.
5. She was a sinner who loved the Lord Jesus Christ much.

II. What did this woman do?

- † “And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil.” (Luke 7:37, 38)

1. She made it her business to know where the Lord was and came to him there (Love).
2. She brought with her an alabaster box of ointment - She came with a sacrifice of faith and honor (giving the best and first fruits to the Lord).
3. She stood at the Savior's feet, behind him (Humility).
4. She wept (True Repentance and Sorrow).
5. She washed his feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair (Gratitude).
6. She kissed the Savior's feet (Tender Love, Devotion, and Adoration).
7. She anointed his feet (Anointed him for his Burial).
8. She did what she could, just for the Lord Jesus Christ (God is number one in our life).

III. What was her motive?

Why did this woman do what she did? How can such an act be explained? What would inspire a poor person to make such a great, extravagant (in the eyes of men) sacrifice?

1. She had owed much.
2. She had been forgiven much.
3. She loved much.

IV. What was the result of this woman's love for the Lord Jesus Christ and her devotion and service to him?

1. She was scorned by Simon the Pharisee, ridiculed by Judas (**Mark 14:3-9**), and misunderstood by the disciples (there are few who understood devotion and whole-hearted devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ).
2. But she had come to Simon's house **not to be honored but to honor God her Savior; and honoring Him, she was honored by Him** as it is written:
 - ✠ "Therefore the Lord God of Israel says: I said indeed *that* your house and the house of your father would walk before Me forever. But now the Lord says: Far be it from Me; for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed" (**1 Samuel 2:30**).
3. **The Lord came to her defense**
 - ✠ "Therefore I say to you, her sins, *which are* many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loves little" (**Luke 7:47**).
4. **The Lord assured her, before her judges and slanderers, that He had forgiven her of all her sins.**
 - ✠ "Your sins are forgiven" (**Luke 7:48**).
5. **The Lord assured her of her faith and spoke peace to her heart**
 - ✠ "Then He said to the woman: Your faith has saved you. Go in peace" (**Luke 7:50**).

To know yourself better, search deep and ask yourself: Are you like Simon the Pharisee or the Sinful Woman. If you find yourself like the Pharisee, remember what St. Paul said about himself:

† “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief” (1 Timothy 1:15)

If you are like the sinful woman, remember that the Lord Jesus Christ is a great Savior, merciful, gracious, compassionate, and ready to save the very chief of sinners. Therefore, ask yourself about what motivates you? Is it to showoff like Simon the Pharisee or the love of the Lord, like the sinful woman?

2. Sinful Judgment

We read the Scripture in Mark 2:1-12 about how people sinfully judge good work, even when it comes from the Lord Himself. Remember when the Lord healed the paralytic who was carried by four men, and instead of his own people saying ‘Thank you Lord’, they said:

† “Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Mark 2:7)

The Pharisees ignored the most important miracle of healing, that is the healing of the soul, and they continued their judgment of the Lord calling Him to be speaking blasphemies. Why? Because they are thinking in a materialistic way; always needing proof. Even when materialistic proof is provided, that seldom works. This problem is as old as scripture where it says:

† “He said to the paralytic, I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house. Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all” (Mark 2:10-11)

What happened afterwards, they delivered Him to Pilate and cried out “Crucify Him”.

So, the question now is: How can we avoid being like the Scribes in making such sinful judgment. We will talk about something called the **4-5-6 method** of avoiding sinful judgment. This includes learning about 4 different types of sinful judgment, 5 dangers of judgment and 6 ways of treating it.

First: Four Types of Judging

1. Judging by Thought

It is exactly like what happened in Mark 2, where it said:

† “And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts: Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this?” (Mark 2:6-7)

So, we can judge others in our thoughts forgetting that God is the One who searches the heart and mind, and He knows all what we think of. Please see what the Scripture says:

† “But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, Why do you reason about these things in your hearts?” (Luke 2:8)

You may be able to deceive others by hiding your thoughts, but you cannot deceive the Lord Who searches the heart and mind.

2. Judging by Words

Some people can go beyond the thought and verbalize what they are thinking in their minds and hearts. Those people should turn to Scripture and heed the following warning:

- † “Why do you boast in evil, O mighty man? The goodness of God endures continually. Your tongue devises destruction, like a sharp razor, working deceitfully. You love evil more than good, lying rather than speaking righteousness” (**Psalm 52:1-3**)

That should not be the case for God’s children for St. James said:

- † “Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening?” (**James 3:10-11**)

3. Judging by Hearing

St. Moses the Black once said:

“Be careful not to hear of the fall of one of your brothers, lest you judged him by lending an ear to the one who judges”.

So, if you don’t act positively and at the very least defend your brother, you are actually judging him by accepting to hear those who judge. That would make God angry as St. Isaiah, from the wilderness, said:

“If you heard a brother judging another brother, do not agree with him lest you make the Lord angry. But humble yourself and tell him: Forgive me my brother for I am a sinful man and I do these same things and I can’t stand mentioning them”

4. Judging by Printed and Recorded Materials

Often times people will take judging to the next level and record people’s conversations or judge them by writing messages, emails, using technology like Photoshop to change pictures to fit an evil act, etc. Those people must remember what the Bible said:

- † “Woe to those who decree unrighteous decrees, who write misfortune, which they have prescribed” (**Isaiah 10:1**)

In general, we must avoid these things and abide by the following commandment:

- † “Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is One Lawgiver (God), who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?” (**James 4:11-12**)

Second: Five Dangers of Judging

1. Sin against God

By judging others, you sin against God because you try to take His place forgetting what is written:

† “Let the heavens declare His righteousness, for God Himself is Judge” (**Psalm 50:6**)

They must remember the following important teaching of God:

† “And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God?” (**Romans 2:3**)

† “But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ” (**Romans 14:10**)

2. Hurting yourself

To judge others, means you bring judgment to yourself from the Lord:

† “Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you” (**Matthew 7:1-2**)

† “Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things” (**Romans 2:1**)

3. Hurting those whom you judge

In judging others, you could hurt not only their feelings but their families, their reputation and their life in general. This brings a difficult warning from the Lord:

† “Then He said to the disciples, it is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe to him through whom they do come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones” (**Luke 17:1-2**)

4. Have no Love in your heart

Our judging could be the result of losing our true love to God and His people.

† “And above all things have fervent love for one another, for love will cover a multitude of sins” (**1 Peter 4:8**)

† “He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes” (**1 John 2:10-11**)

5. Loss of Humility

Those who judge are mostly prideful people, forgetting that their pride makes them fragile and would be an easy target for Satan to cause them to sin:

- ✠ “For she (sin) has cast down many wounded, and all who were slain by her were strong men” (**Proverbs 7:26**)

Third: Six Ways of Treating Judging

1. Respect people (they are humans having weaknesses and sins exactly like you)

- ✠ “Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another” (**Romans 12:10**)

2. Do not listen to others (investigate and make sure if necessary)

- ✠ “Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, were instructed” (**Luke 1:1-4**)

3. Do not volunteer or make yourself a judge and learn from the Lord

Although God is the one and only Judge, He set the example for us to refrain from judging others as it says in the scripture:

- ✠ “Then one from the crowd said to Him: Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me. But He said to him, Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?” (**Luke 12:13-14**)

Our Lord Jesus Christ has every right to judge all those around Him and in the final days, everyone will stand before His judgment. Nonetheless, He wants to teach us to refrain from judging others, even when it seems right to do so.

4. Do not waste your effort in removing the thorns but focus on growing the wheat (that represents purity and good heart)

Sometimes, we participate in judging people thinking that in so doing, we are a kind of social reformer, trying to fix people’s mistakes. In reality, we should not waste our time and efforts in pointing out people’s mistakes. We should focus on teaching by example, supporting those in need instead of judging them, and reaching out for those who are helpless. A time will definitely come for them to know that they need to change their ways.

- ✠ “So the servants of the owner came and said to him: Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares? He said to them: An enemy has done this. The servants said to him: Do you want us then to go and gather them up? Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn” (**Matthew 13:30**)

In the accepted time, the Lord will be the one to remove the tares from the field, meaning He will judge those deserving judgment. Let us not burden ourselves to go labor in the field and gather the tares, meaning to judge others.

5. Humble yourself

✠ “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall” (**Proverbs 16:18**)

6. Keep yourself busy

✠ “For idleness teaches much evil” (**Sirach 33:29**)

Finally,

Judging others means you are not forgiving them for whatever they did and you may have wrongly thought that it was a sin. In this way, you are putting yourself under difficult judgment from the Lord. Do you remember what the Lord said to His disciples when they asked Him how to pray. He taught them the Lord’s Prayer and did not comment on anything except one important issue:

✠ “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matthew 6: 14-15)

✠ “Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven” (Luke 6: 37)

So, do you want God to forgive you your sins or not? If you do, judge not. If not, here is the one last warning from St. James:

✠ “If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one’s religion is useless” (**James 1:26**)